Introduction to the Australian Society for Biophysics

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The Australian Society for Biophysics (ASB; <http://www.biophysics.org.au>) represents researchers across Australia and New Zealand with an interest in the application of theories and methods from physics to the understanding of biology. As such, our society is home to scientists across a breadth of disciplines including physicists, computer scientists, engineers, chemists, physiologists, mathematicians, and pharmacologists. As of April 2019, we have 195 members, with the current office bearers being: Dr. Adam Hill (President; Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute;), Dr. Mathew Baker (President-elect/vice-president; UNSW), A/Prof Adelle Coster (Immediate past president; UNSW), A/Prof Megan O'Mara (Secretary; ANU), and Dr. Charles Cranfield (Treasurer; UTS). The society was founded in 1975 under the inaugural president, Alan Walker, at a meeting of the Australian Society for Plant Physiologists and the Australian Biochemical Society. The first Annual General Meeting was held at the University of New England the following year, and we have continued to meet annually for 42 years since, most recently at the joint meeting of the ASB and the Asian Biophysical Association (ABA), held at RMIT University in 2018.

The ASB/ABA joint meeting, incorporating biophysical societies from China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Australia was a significant one for

the ASB since these Asian partners are a particular focus for our international outreach. Since 2005, the ASB has had a mutual agreement with the Biophysical Society of Japan (BSJ) aimed at promoting exchanges to foster collaboration amongst scientists from our two countries. This arrangement allows members of both societies to enjoy reciprocal membership rights and to be eligible as speakers at each other's meetings. As a result of the partnership, a joint symposium is held each year in either Japan or Australia, and this will continue at the 57th Annual meeting of Biophysical Society of Japan at Miyazaki in 2019. On a similar theme, this coming year, we will participate in a joint Australia-China session at the 16th International Chinese Biophysics Congress in Tianjin, China, organised by the Chinese Biophysical Society. This symposium will hopefully be the start of a new ongoing relationship that bears fruit in the form of many future collaborations in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition to these major society meetings, in recent years the ASB has supported satellite meetings and workshops to celebrate Biophysics week. Biophysics week is an annual international initiative driven by the US Biophysical Society to raise awareness of the field of biophysics and stimulate interdisciplinary research within our research community. This year's symposium, with a theme of "Structural Biology at Interfaces" was another successful event, and I look forward to continuing this tradition into the future as a means to further grow biophysics in Australia and to continue to raise the profile of the ASB.

This brings me back to the ASB/ABA meeting, around which this special issue of *Biophysical Reviews* is based. Asia has a tradition of strength in biophysical science, and the speakers at the joint meeting reflected this, with world leaders in computational biology, membrane biophysics, structural biology and mechanobiology amongst those showcasing their work. A number of invited speakers

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and session chairs were invited to contribute articles for this special issue, and I am sure you will appreciate reading these topical reviews of their respective fields as much as I enjoyed seeing them present their work in Melbourne.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest Adam Hill declares that he has no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by the author.

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